DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 429 087 TM 029 618

AUTHOR Shalimov, Piotr
TITLE Internet Resources on American and Russian Education: Virtual Tools for Academic Research.
PUB DATE 1999-00-00
NOTE 19p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Databases; *Educational Research; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Information Dissemination; *Internet; *Online Searching; Online Systems; Research Methodology; *Resources
IDENTIFIERS *Russia; *United States

ABSTRACT

Internet resources in Russia and the United States that deal with education are compared. Resources in both countries are listed for the following areas: (1) search engines; (2) specialized databases with limited access; (3) libraries; (4) on-line databases and information systems; (5) books on education, educational journals, and newspapers (in electronic format); (6) special reports and surveys; (7) selected materials on educational topics; (8) special Web sites; (9) Ministries of education; (10) schools and universities; (11) references; (12) legislation; (13) international organizations; (14) general mass media sources; and (15) learning resources on the Internet. The ERIC system is mentioned as an effective way to acquire information about education. The comparison shows some advantages to U.S. education resources available through the Internet. (SLD)

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ED 429 087

INTERNET RESOURCES ON AMERICAN AND RUSSIAN EDUCATION: VIRTUAL TOOLS FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH

by
Piotr Shalimov

Internet and other telecommunication systems open a new era in academic research. Telecommunications provide easy and fast access to a variety of digital data which, in some cases, becomes an alternative for traditional printed (paper-based) sources. Some materials and tools are available in digital format only, for example, databases, electronic journals, web-sites, teleconferences, «search» functions, etc. Thanks to the Internet, research sources were added with a huge amount of fast processible data that is easily accessible, no matter where research is being undertaken, (national boundaries or visas do not separate the «virtual community»). The research itself becomes less costly, less dependent on the physical location of the researcher and his/her material environment, i.e., equipment, library holdings, people and so forth, in other words, contemporary research is somehow virtualized. The impact of the Internet on academic research is two-fold: the research seems to be easier because of the availability of the gigabytes of data on the one hand, and it turns up to be more complex because of the necessity to deal with the additional data as well as with «traditional» sources, on the other hand.

Using the Internet as a source for academic research might cause a set of problems. For instance:

- «searching» replaces reading. It is possible for the Internet users to extract just «pieces of information» found with the keywords instead of getting «the whole picture» by reading a book or an article.
- compilation instead of thinking and analyzing. «Pieces of information» downloaded from the Internet can be successfully combined in a readable, scholarly looking file. In this case, thinking might be less effective than good compilation techniques.
- accessibility and checkability. Some people do have access to the Internet and some people do not. It means, that some researches would not be able to check the Internet related references. In some cases virtual information simply disappears (for example, web-site is not

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longer supported - «File Not Found»), sometimes connection with a server can not be established.

- reliability of data. The Internet's information exists in the electronic format. It is also often uncontrolled and unedited. There might be numerous misprints and misspellings, incomplete and/or inaccurate files, etc. University students (and not only students) can use the Internet to retrieve term papers (referaty) and to compile «virtual bibliographies».
- irregular, erratic and somehow chaotic representation of data on the Internet depending on topic, country and so on. Any kind of comparative research solely based on the Internet sources would be definitely incomplete. Another part of this problem is information overloading. As of December 29, 1998 AltaVista search engine found 23,235,346 Web pages containing the word «education».

Taking into account the discourse stated above, this paper deals with the comparative description of the Internet resources on education in Russia and the USA.

1. Search engines.

Research starts with «search». There are several on-line search engines which make it possible to search the whole Internet on specific topic, expression or word(s). Perhaps, AltaVista
http://www.altavista.com/cgi-bin/query?pg=aq
is the most comprehensive and convenient engine for keyword search. The Russian analog is YANDEX-WEB
http://yandex.ru/
which is helpful in finding information placed on Russian Web pages in Cyrillic alphabet. Both search engines have «advanced search» function. Infoseek
http://www.infoseek.com/Topic/Education/Education_problems_and_issues?tid=14989
and Yahoo
http://dir.yahoo.com/Education/Reform/
http://dir.yahoo.com/Education/Statistics/
opened special links and web-pages reflecting the issues of education reform, education statistics, multicultural education, national testing, school violence, etc.

Russian equivalents may be found at RUSLINE

http://www.rusline.com/ (in English),
АУ! http://www.au.ru/themes2.asp?ID=15 (in Russian)
List Ru http://www.list.ru/catalog/602.html (in Russian),
Redline http://www.redline.ru/education/index.htm (in Russian),
Informika http://www.informika.ru/ (in Russian).
RUSLINE is a business oriented server which provides some links to Russian universities, business schools and electronic publications. АУ! and List Ru are systematically organized catalogs of Russian-language Internet resources and they contain a special page on education. Redline (Russian Education On-Line) is a special education-oriented server and Internet provider. Useful links to educational journals, educational newsletters, educational institutions, and educational servers are listed there. Informika is a server supported by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation. On this server, one can find information on the Ministry of Education, distant education, databases, conferences, grants and other topics related to education. Informika is also a database itself and it is supplied with the «search» function.

2. Specialized databases with limited access.

In the USA, there is a special organization called ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) which provides information on education. It is even possible to ask ERIC experts about educational publications (this service is free and available at http://ericir.syr.edu/Qa/).
ERIC database:
http://ericir.syr.edu/plweb-cgi/fastweb?searchform+ericdb
is free for doing search, but payment should be made for retrieving the document.
H. W. Wilson Databases offer Education Index/Education Abstracts services http://www.hwwilson.com/edi.HTM
which provide a searchable access to more than 400 English-language periodicals (see a list of periodicals included in the database at http://www.hwwilson.com/edij.HTM). This is a subject-oriented database which covers numerous educational topics and it is especially useful for doing research on contemporary issues in education. As of November 1998, this database showed 5232 records for the phrase «education reform» in ''All of these words'' mode and 808 records for the keywords «Russia» AND «education», as well as 2453 records for the keywords

«America» AND «education». Some sort of information related to hot issues in American education may be obtained from Newspaper Abstracts http://www.lib.ohio-state.edu/OhioLINK/NewsPaper_Abstracts.html that is a database covering major American newspapers starting from 1989. For example, a search for «charter» AND «school» matched 1691 records. Periodical Abstracts 1986 - Present http://www.lib.ohio-state.edu/OhioLINK/Periodical_Abstracts.html contain citations and abstracts from more than 1,600 general-interest periodicals. 8289 records were found for «education» AND «reform» keywords. Textual statistical excerpts from a variety of sources are available through A Matter of Fact database http://www.silverplatter.com/catalog/amof.htm As it was done in previous cases, a simple search for «education» AND «reform» brings us 270 excerpts full of statistical data. ProQuest Digital Dissertations http://www.library.ohiou.edu/subjects/indexes/proquestdd.htm gives to a researcher an idea on dissertations defended in American Universities. Another useful bibliographical database is the WorldCat (see its basic description at http://www.oclc.org/oclc/man/6928fsdb/worldcat.htm). It contains more than 32 million records describing items owned by libraries around the world, mainly of those in the USA. One can find 19,092 records on education in America, 2915 records regarding Russian education and more then 1 million records referring to «education».

Russian specialized databases are not so well represented as the American ones. For example, NNS (National News Service) offers National Electronic Library http://www.nns.ru/sources/index.html which contains more than 3 million documents from about 2000 sources of information. Those sources are mostly mass media types of information and they might be of certain interest to the researchers of contemporary Russian education. An on-line Information System Park http://is.park.ru/park/ provides access to its search system which is based on more than 100 newspapers, journals, and information agencies archives. A user of the system can do a search for free, but a payment is required for obtaining a full text version of the document.

3. Libraries

Besides the WorldCat and RLIN/Eureka (http://lyra.rlg.org/pubslist.html) which provide access to their databases by subscription only, there are also several on-line library catalogs in the USA that are available via the Internet for free. The Library of Congress Catalogs
http://lcweb.loc.gov/catalog/
are open for the Internet users on Monday-Friday (4:40 a.m.-9:30 p.m.), Saturday (8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.), Sunday (11:35 a.m.-5:00 p.m.) *USA Eastern* Time. There is also an experimental online public retrieval system (ESS)
http://lcweb2.loc.gov/resdev/ess/
that is available for search 24 hours a day. Although this is a test system and results may not be all inclusive, a simple search for the keywords «Russia» NEAR «education» found 2367 items. This result is quiet comparable with the WorldCat's output.
OhioLINK Central Catalog
http://olc1.ohiolink.edu/search/
is a good option for those looking for English-language literature on education. Book description in this electronic catalog features table of contents of collective author monographs and collections of essays.

Russian library catalogs are less ''Internetized'' than the American digital sources. A fortunate exception is introduced by INION (The Institute of Scientific Information on Social Sciences)
http://www.inion.ru/index.htm
Starting from February 1998, the INION offers a free trial access to its electronic catalogs which contain records from 1993 to present. The records are well organized and might be found by keywords written either in Russian or English. For example, the 1996-1998 database contains 6,665 items which include the keyword «education», while a specialized database on sociology and philosophy (1981 - 1998) displays 7,663 items on education. It is also possible to order electronic copies of the documents which are no more than 50 pages in length. The Russian State Library
http://www.rsl.ru/resource/data.htm
provides an access to its electronic catalog of new entries (records since May 1998) and dissertation database (records since 1987).
It might be worthwhile to try the search system of The Scientific Library of the Moscow State University (Nauchnaya biblioteka MGU)
http://www.lib.msu.su:8001/svecgi.htm

but, sometimes, this server does not respond properly.
A specialized pedagogical library of the Russian Academy of Education (Gosudarstvennaya Nauchnaya Pedagogicheskaya Biblioteka imeni K. D. Ushinskogo) has developed an electronic bibliographical database on CD-ROM (which also includes journal articles!). However, it is still unconnected with the Internet.

4. On-line databases and information systems.

Some databases can be accessible via Internet free of charge. Probably, the most comprehensive of them is SIRS Researcher
http://researcher.sirs.com/index.html
which accumulates English-language articles (usually in full text format) from around 1500 newspapers, magazines, journals and government publications. More than 150 subject headings were retrieved from SIRS while searching for «education».
National Center for Education Statistics of the US Department of Education (NCES) offers a searchable database called Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System
http://nces.ed.gov/ipedsearlyrelease/index.html
for selecting postsecondary education institutions in the USA.
Another search tool offered by the NCES is International Archive of Education Data (IAED)
http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/IAED/
The Digital Education Network
http://www.edunet.com/
has a search engine for postsecondary courses offered worldwide and education event finder. There are also some useful links, e.g. English Grammar On Line
http://www.edunet.com/english/grammar/
English Practice Pages
http://www.edunet.com/english/practice.html
for those willing to improve their English-language skills.
An example of relatively small database focusing on particular educational topic may be found at:
http://www.uga.edu/~mctf/database.html
(Multicultural Education Bibliography)

Russian databases on education are concentrated in a special section of the Informika Web-server

http://www.informika.ru/text/database/
This section includes databases on schools and universities, state educational standards, international support for Russian science and others.

5. Books on education, educational journals and newspapers

A variety of books and periodicals is available in electronic format for the Internet users. NAP Reading Room of the National Academy Press
http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/enter2.cgi?ED.html
offers free access to full text versions of more than 100 books on elementary and secondary education, higher education and general titles in education.
A good selection of books, governmental materials and speeches related to education is located at The On-Line Books Page
http://www-cgi.cs.cmu.edu/cgi-bin/book/subjectstart?L
The Internet Public Library puts together links to educational serials
http://www.ipl.org/cgi-bin/reading/serials.out.pl?ty=long&id=soc3000
Some of those serials, for example, Education Policy Analysis Archives
http://olam.ed.asu.edu/epaa/
NetTeach News Online
http://www.chaos.com/netteach/
are published in electronic format only.
Those who are interested in the developments of contemporary American education will find a lot of information in the Education Week on the Web
http://www.edweek.org/
which provides access to Education Week and Teacher Magazine archives, and to special reports covering the current state of education in the USA.
The educational technology journal (FNO)
http://fromnowon.org/.www.html
is focusing on educational issues in the digital age.

The links to Russian educational journals are organized at Russian education-oriented Web-server Informika:
http://www.informika.ru/text/magaz/
The general educational problems are discussed in Uchitel'skaya Gazeta
http://www.ug.ru/

and in Courier of Education (electronic journal)
http://www.informika.ru/text/magaz/newpaper/messedu/
while the issues of higher education are addressed in
Vuzovskie vesti
http://www.informika.ru/text/magaz/newpaper/vuznews/
Vysshee obrazovanie v Rossii
http://www.informika.ru/text/magaz/higher/
and Magistr
http://www.informika.ru/text/goscom/cinorgan/niivo/mag/titmag.html
The state of elementary education in Russia is observed in the journal
Nachal'naya shkola
http://www.openworld.ru/school/
A permanent rubric on education is published by Russkii Zhurnal
http://www.russ.ru/journal/edu/index.html

6. Special Reports and Surveys (mostly American sites)

American governmental and non-governmental institutions produce a large amount of reports and surveys dealing with educational issues. Many reports and surveys of that kind are available through the Internet. Some examples include the following Internet-accessible materials:
The 30th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll Of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, September 1998
http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kp9809-a.htm
America's Children: Key National Indicators of Child Well-Being, 1998
http://www.childstats.gov/ac1998/toc.htm
The Condition of Education, 1998, released by the NCES
http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/condition98/index.html
The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 1996 Trends in Academic Progress
http://nces.ed.gov/naep/96report/97986.shtml
National Adult Literacy Survey, 1992
http://nces.ed.gov/nadlits/Overview.html
Educational Research and Improvement: Reports and Studies, by The US Department of Education subcategorized in 31 topics
http://www.ed.gov/pubs/studies.html
Quality Counts'98: The Urban Challenge (produced by the Education Week on the Web in collaboration with the Pew Charitable Trusts):

http://www.edweek.org/sreports/qc98/

The Russian reports and surveys on the state of education are uneasy to find in the Internet. However, the Center for Sociological Studies at the Ministry of Higher and Professional Education of the Russian Federation released, recently, several surveys on current trends in higher education, professional education and secondary education. They are all available free of charge at:
http://www.informika.ru/text/goscom/cinorgan/socio/first_pg.html

7. Selected Materials on Educational Topics

Occasionally, some organizations distribute materials about urgent issues that are put on the education agenda. The Education Week on the Web presents, for instance, a selection of materials related to interrelations between public and private schools
http://www.edweek.org/sreports/public.htm
or to increasing enrollment at K-12 level
http://www.edweek.org/sreports/demog.htm
The US Department of Education reported on crime and violence in American schools
http://www.ed.gov/updates/fact-209.html
and Teacher Talk Web-magazine focused on the issues of sex education
http://education.indiana.edu/cas/tt/v1i3/table.html

A daily updated overview of Russian Press on Education is located at Informika Web-server
http://www.informika.ru/text/new/press/
Many useful recommendations on teaching different subjects at school can be observed in Pervoe Sentyabrya newspaper
http://www.1september.ru/ru/first.htm

8. Special web-sites

Special Web-sites focusing on specific educational topic or problem is another good source of information on contemporary education.
EducationCommunity.com
http://educationcommunity.com/u/default4.htm
welcomes anyone who is interested in higher education issues.
Grandfather Education Reform Report

http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/3795/education.htm
is a Web-site dedicated to the crucial issues in American education, mainly to the recent failures of American educational institutions.
The U.S. Education Information Center opened a Web-site
http://www.useic.ru/
designed for the citizens of the Russian Federation who want to continue their studies or research in the USA.
The history of education site
http://www.socsci.kun.nl/ped/whp/histeduc/index2.html
covers briefly the world history of education with an emphasis on the history of American education.
The issues of educational standards are observed at Developing Educational Standards Web-site
http://putwest.boces.org/Standards.html
A special Web-site is dedicated to Urban Education in the States
http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/
U. S. Network for Education Information (USNEI)
http://www.ed.gov/NLE/USNEI/toc.html
is a hyperlink-organized overview of the American education system and education around the world.

A special page with useful links to educational information in the CIS.
http://solar.rtd.utk.edu/friends/edusci/educ.html(opt,mozilla,pc,english,,ice) was constructed at Friends and Partners Web-server. Institute for the Study of Russian Education at Indiana University
http://www.indiana.edu/~isre/ISRE_Frames.html
offers on-line edition of a newsletter focusing on contemporary developments in Russian education.

9. Ministries of Education

Both the Ministry of General and Professional Education of the Russian Federation
http://www.informika.ru/text/goscom/
and the US Department of Education
http://www.ed.gov/
created very informative Web-sites with many useful links to education related resources.

10. Schools and Universities

A good collection of links to American Universities granting bachelor or advanced degrees is located at:
http://www.clas.ufl.edu/CLAS/american-universities.html#Z
This site also features special sections on international universities, Canadian universities and community colleges.
Virtual profiles of all accredited colleges and universities in the US and Canada are collected by College Search
http://www.collegeview.com/collegeview-cgi/college-search/search
that is also a useful source of information for college entrance seekers.
Basic data on American schools, with school's homepage addresses (each of more than 106,000 schools in the US is given a free ASD Web site), is stuffed in American School Directory
http://www.asd.com/
This is a searchable database organized by the state and/or school name.
A far less comprehensive Russian analog, named «Schools on Internet» might be reached at:
http://www.imras.yar.ru/~korn/school/index.html
For clearly unknown reason only an English version of this site is available at the moment.

A list of Russian Universities (in English) is compiled by the Moscow branch of the US Education Information Center
http://www.useic.ru/rus_univ/
Perhaps, the most comprehensive up-to-date listing of the Russian institutions of higher education (including their branches) is presented at:
http://lotusserver.informika.ru/VR/
(in Russian)

11. References

Special reference sources on education, such as dictionaries or encyclopedias, are still a rare case in the Internet. Meanwhile, Education Week on the Web compiled a glossary of frequently used educational terms and phrases
http://www.edweek.org/context/glossary/glossary.htm
A Russian version of contemporary educational phraseology (Thesaurus for teachers and school psychologists) is available at:
http://come.to/nev

Basic descriptions of now-in-use educational theories and learning concepts may be found in The Theory into Practice Database
http://www.gwu.edu/~tip/
Glossary of Internet terms
http://www.matisse.net/files/glossary.html
is a helpful reference for Web searchers.
General interest reference information system, for example, Infoplease
http://www.infoplease.com/
is a good option for those, seeking fast and short answers.
The most comprehensive on-line version of English-Russian-English Dictionary
http://www.medialingua.texnopark.com/english/russian/MultilexOnline/MOLFrames.htm
would assist in overcoming language difficulties.

12. Legislation

A huge amount of legal materials is available from the Internet Law Library
http://law.house.gov/
A special section deals with education and the law (primarily with American legislation)
http://law.house.gov/99.htm
while another one is dedicated to the laws of other nations
http://law.house.gov/52.htm
including Russia
http://law.house.gov/80.htm
Hieros Gamos is a name of a special legal Web-site which contains Guide to Education Law
http://www.hg.org/edu.html
Its Hg Education of Law News
http://nt.excite.com/ntd.gw?UID=504D6587344F8976;page=show;topic=HG%20Education%20of%20Law%20News
is a daily updated selection of brief news and articles related to recent developments in American educational laws.
A searchable database FindLaw
http://www.findlaw.com/01topics/37education/index.html
is helpful in finding particular items. There is also a free Education Law Mailing List.

Several Web-sites contain information on selected topics. For example, EdLaw
http://www.edlaw.net/
would be of special interest to special educators.
A brief description of recently adopted legislation on education (1990 - 1994) is described at
http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Prog95/pt2fed.html

Russian legal resources on the Internet are not so easily accessible as the American ones, but there is still some good stuff to work with. Very useful links, including some free legal databases are located at:
http://www.chat.ru/~antr/LAW.HTM
News from the Russian Parliament (State Duma) and its Committee on Education and Science are delivered by the Agency of Economic and Legal Consultations and Business Information at:
http://www.akdi.ru/gd/NEWS.HTM
Current changes in legislation are observed in the Klever weekly digest
http://www.moscow.klever.net/labas/topnews.html
A collection of governmental materials related to education is placed at the Informika Web-server
http://www.informika.ru/text/goscom/normdoc/soder.html

13. International Organizations

Several international organizations produce data and analyses relevant to education. This kind of products should be of special interest to comparativists. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) offers a wide range of educational data including international statistics
http://unesco.uneb.edu/unesco/educprog/stat/stat_idx.htm
Educational Materials section
http://www.unesco.org/education/educnews/d_p_idx.htm
brings full texts of selected UNESCO documents in education on-line, as well as a list of printed publications, reports, and multimedia library.
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) maintains a special Web-page on education
http://www.oecd.org/els/edu/els_ed.htm
Its Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI)
http://www.oecd.org/els/edu/els_ceri.htm

gives access to on-line publications and program descriptions of the Centre.
International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)
http://uttou2.to.utwente.nl/
is a nongovernmental organization which carries out cross-national educational studies. The results of those studies are easier to obtain from the third parties (for example, Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) through the server of the US Department of Education http://nces.ed.gov/timss/).

14. General Mass Media Sources

Those sources are valuable for doing research on recent crucial educational issues. Some newspapers, for example The Washington Post
http://search.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/searches/mainsrch.htm
deliver their searchable electronic versions to the Internet users.
Information Agency, such as Reuters
http://www.reuters.com/news/news_search.html
is a good choice for fresh look-ups.
CNN
http://www.cnn.com/SEARCH/
covers the most significant events in the USA, including the area of education. Some stories are followed up with useful related materials, as it was in the case with recent school shootings in the USA
http://www.cnn.com/US/9803/25/school.violence.statistics/index.html

Russian central newspapers are hardly available without paid subscription. Meantime, regional press is more Internet friendly.
Vladnews, a daily newspaper from Vladivostok
http://vl.vladnews.ru/ARCHIVE/Default.asp
and Svobodnyi Sakhalin
http://www.snc.ru/~SVS/archif.htm
are available digitally free of charge.
A weekly newspaper Inostranets, and its rubric «Education» covering education abroad and different issues of international education is placed at:
http://www.florin.ru/koi/ino/index.html
It would be worthwhile to check out the catalog of links to Russian periodicals on-line

http://kulichki-win.rambler.ru/~shura/paper-k.htm
which is also accompanied with the notes on their accessibility.

15. Learning resources on the Internet

There is a plenty of English-language resources for educators and students on the Internet.
Nice collections of well selected links to those resources are located at:
http://www.capecod.net/schrockguide/edres.htm
and
http://www.vrd.org/locator/subject.html
Federal Resources for Educational Excellence
http://www.ed.gov/free/
provides access to federally sponsored resources in education. Certain types of educational software are available at
gopher://gopher.ed.gov/11/software
Instructional materials are stuffed at The Gateway to Educational Materials
http://thegateway.org/ (for instructors)

Russian educational materials are relatively poor. There is still something to discover at List.ru
http://www.list.ru/catalog/10220.html
although some links mislead to advertisements.
WWW Resources on Educational Programs
http://www.history.ru/progr.htm
and Progressor.ru
http://www.progressor.ru:8083/ped.htm
provide links to demo-versions and freeware learning programs.
A list of new textbooks for sale
http://www.mistral.ru/razdel7.shtml
gives a general idea on current updates in this field.
Students can get numerous reports and term papers (referaty) in almost all subjects at:
http://www.uco.ru/~romic/referats/
and
http://referat.ricor.ru/05.htm
Some free stuff for learning English is available at:
http://www.study.ru/

Joint Russian - American learning and education projects are represented at:
http://www.mcn.org/ed/ross/gv.htm
and
http://www.gtp.org/gtp.htm

Conclusions

A comparison of American and Russian Internet resources on education shows certain advantages of the former. The American databases and library electronic catalogs are well organized, regularly updated, easily accessible, searchable and contain a vast variety of data. Contrary, there is only a limited number of Russian on-line databases which are hardly accessible, expensive, unsystemized, and not always supplied with the «search» function. With some few exceptions, Russian libraries are either virtually unavailable, or provide very limited services for the Internet users.

Although, it is difficult to find recently published academic books on American education in the WWW, there are still hundreds of them in full text version. Russian books on education seem to be unfrequented in cyberspace, as the only one book entitled, Thesaurus for Teachers and School Psychologists was eventually found.

Special reports, special surveys, special Web-sites, educational statistics and learning materials are absolutely dominated by the American sources; there is almost nothing to look up on that type of information in the Russian Web-pages. Russian schools are definitely less represented in the Internet compare to the schools in the USA which are all given a free American School Directory Web-site.

Nevertheless, both American and Russian Internet resources on education have good, as well as weak points. For example, Russian educational newspapers and journals are very well represented in the Internet, while the American leading journals in education are usually not available without paying a subscription fee.

An observer of Russian education can mention a tendency to concentrate high quality Internet resources in one place, for example, at the Informika Web-server which is regularly updated with perfectly organized and structured databases, such as a recently created database on the Russian institutions of higher education (http://lotusserver.informika.ru/VR/). This «centralizing» tendency is somehow opposite to the extremely

diversified and «decentralized» resources presented by the American part of the Internet that is close to information overload and chaotic misclassification of actual and future digital data.

Summing up, a relatively poor performance of the Russian education on the Internet is caused by the factors as follows:

1) A high level of commercialization of the Russian Internet. Even governmental materials are not always provided free of charge (see, for example, Normativnye i rasporyaditel'nye dokumenty Minobrazovaniya [http://www.informika.ru/text/goscom/normdoc/soder.html], or Obrazovanie v dokumentakh [http://www.informika.ru/text/magaz/educom]). 2) Lack or poor representation of certain types of Internet-based resources on education, e.g., reports, surveys, books, special Web-sites, statistics, library catalogs, learning resources. 3) Technical problems, i.e., slowly working Web-servers, difficulties in establishing connection with the servers, irregular support of the Web-sites.

On the other side, the advancement of American educational resources in the Internet is based on the tradition of free information supply to the public. It should be also mentioned, that Americans are the most intensive users of the Internet in the world. They have fast working telephone and fiber-optic lines, many personal computers hooked up to the Internet, and, in addition, a lot of volunteers working in cyberspace. Usually, America-based Web-sites have better financial support from both governmental and non-governmental organizations than the Russian ones.

Generally speaking, it is still impossible to conduct a comprehensive academic research in education using the Internet resources only. However, the Internet resources should be considered as an important source of additional information in the chosen field of study. In some cases, those resources should be given a preference compare to printed materials because they can be accessed and searched fast and easily; this access is usually unlimited, in terms of time and space; digital format of the Internet resources allows to better utilize huge amounts of data and to create personal electronic database; they can serve as interactive research tools in forms of information exchange and collaborative projects.

As more and more data become available digitally on the Internet, the importance of the Internet-based resources for academic research would increase significantly.

Piotr Shalimov is a doctoral student at the School of Education, Hokkaido University, Sapporo, Japan.
e-mail: piotr@edu.hokudai.ac.jp